

ARMY BALLOON SQUAD TESTING AIRSHIPS.

Trying Out Craft of Various Make and Mastering Aerial Problems.

PICKED BODY OF MEN

Slow to Recognize the Utility of Air Navigation, the Lost Time is Now Rapidly Made Up—Well Equipped Works for the Purpose Installed at Fort Myer, Near Washington.

Washington, D. C.—The present Government tests of airships of various types will serve to bring prominently before the public the functions and personnel of the newest and one of the most interesting branches of the United States army—the Balloon Squad. The little group of men who within the past few months have qualified as experts in the handling of sky craft will serve as the nucleus of what will ultimately become one of the most important organizations in Uncle Sam's military establishment—a trained body such as is essential, if this nation is to overcome the long lead already gained by France, Germany and Great Britain in military aeronautics.

The Balloon Squad is a branch of the United States Signal Corps. For a number of years ballooning has been regarded in military circles, as an essential adjunct to the signal work of the army, but Americans have been unaccountably tardy in exploiting its possibilities.

Picturesque indeed, were the circumstances which finally aroused the Yankee officers to action. The spark that set interest and energy aflame in this direction was the winning of the first international balloon race by Lieut. Frank P. Lahm. That young American army officer, barely twenty-eight years of age and almost a novice in the work, should defeat the most experienced aeronauts of Europe and win a decisive victory in what was, up to that time, the greatest aerial sporting event the world had ever seen, could not help but kindle the patriotism and the aeronautic interest of his fellow officers at home and abroad.

The outcome of the sentiment thus aroused was the issuance of an order creating the Aeronautical Division of the Signal Corps. It was arranged to get out of storage the several balloons of foreign make which had been bought by the United States during the Spanish war and had been in storage ever since, and it was decided that the headquarters of the new activities should be at a "balloon house" at Fort Myer, Va., just across the Potomac from Washington, and where the progress could be closely watched by the administrative officials of the War Department. It is the expectation that ere many months elapse a second detachment of the Aeronautical division will be organized at Fort Omaha, Neb., where the government is now building a model balloon house and is installing what it is hoped to be the most up-to-date plant in the world for the manufacture of the hydrogen gas used for the inflation of balloons.

The balloonists at Fort Myer have the care of all the balloons owned by the War Department. These include a French balloon of 9,000 cubic feet capacity, which was bought during the Spanish War; a balloon, 26,000 cubic feet capacity, of German manufacture, which was acquired at the same time; the famous Balloon No. 10, of 76,000 cubic feet capacity, which was built especially for the Signal Corps by Lee Stevens and three small balloons of German manufacture, 400 cubic feet capacity each, which are intended primarily for signal work but which are proving very useful at Fort Myer as reserve reservoirs for the storage of a surplus supply of hydrogen during the inflation of the big balloons.

Uncle Sam's establishment is pretty well equipped, in addition to a vast array of such standard adjuncts as ballast bags, anchors, baskets and the like, there are instruments for registering the lifting power of a gas bag and for testing the quality of the gas in use. One ingenious mechanical assistant is an apparatus, operated by turning a crank, which inflates a balloon with air so that it may be tested for leaks or to facilitate repair work.

For the time being the hydrogen gas used as the lifting medium in the dirigible and all other balloons is manufactured at a temporary plant at Fort Myer, but ultimately all the gas required for army balloon operations anywhere in this country will be manufactured at the Fort Omaha plant and will be shipped wherever needed in tanks somewhat resembling, save for their larger size, the gas tanks used in connection with soda water fountains.

The balloon squad has its regular drills just as do other branches of the military service. The most important of these has for its object the inflation of a balloon.

10,000 Wed from One School. Cincinnati, Ohio.—President Hill of Lebanon University declares that fully 10,000 matrimonial matches had been made through the influence of the school since it was founded fifty-two years ago.

WIRELESS RAYS A MENACE TO HEALTH.

Will Probably Cause Some Mysterious Disease Like the X-Rays Did.

London, England.—It is now asserted that wireless telegraphy may turn out to be a menace to health of the human race.

Basing his alarming suggestion on the fact that the Admiralty is now sending messages to the British fleet at sea by means of a wireless telegraphic apparatus erected at the Navy Headquarters in Whitehall, a well-known scientist says:

"This means that ether waves are being let loose in one of the densest parts of London, in my opinion a most dangerous experiment, considering the totally unsuspected results produced by X-rays, which are only another form of ether waves, upon people coming into frequent contact with them.

"With this wireless system once in use the people not only of London, but of all England, will be continually subjected to these mysterious and little understood ether disturbances, with possibly calamitous results in the shape of some fearful and obscure disease akin to that caused by X-rays."

Professor Sir William Crookes, when consulted on the subject, immediately admitted the possibility of the wireless rays being injurious.

"Marconi rays and X-ray," he said, "are both vibrations of ether. The X-rays did not produce any injurious effect for some years, and the fact that they were at all dangerous was not suspected. Personally, though I have worked with the X-rays from the beginning, I have escaped harm. It is possible that the wireless rays may have an ill effect upon people constantly subjected to them, though I have not heard of a case yet."

A professor at King's College said: "It is so uncertain at present in what way the X-rays generate skin disease that I should not care to affirm that wireless rays have no such effect. For a considerable time no one imagined the X-rays to be harmful and then several bad cases occurred. It is impossible to be sure that the Marconi waves are not injurious, when we know that the X-ray ether waves are so dangerous. It cannot be denied that another set of ether waves will have their own special action upon the human system. It might be undiscovered for years. Experiment alone can determine whether these wireless rays are harmless or not."

WIFE GOT THE MONEY.

"Come On" Was Wise, and Bunco Men Were Buncoed.

Wichita, Kan.—J. J. Savage, a ranch owner of Amarillo, Texas, came to this city to bet \$3,500 on a "fixed" horserace. He has fled back to Texas with his own money and \$500 belonging to the four men who tried to fleece him. He brought a draft here to wager on the race. After Savage cashed the draft the bunco men gave him \$500 of their own money to wager, thinking to convince him that the deal was all right. Before the wager was made a friend gave the Texan a tip, however, and he and his wife hired a motor car, drove from the city to Wellington, and took a train home. Mrs. Savage took charge of her husband's \$3,500 and the bunco men's \$500.

IS \$20,000,000 WASTED?

Experts Say Government's Ohio River Dams Are Bad.

Pittsburg, Pa.—The most of the \$20,000,000 which has already been expended by the government in making the six dams below Pittsburg, in the Ohio River, has been practically thrown away, is the contention of rivermen, and there is a fight on in the matter between river interests and the engineers in charge of the government work.

It appears that the government dams have been so constructed that the water eddies immediately below the dams, making sand bars, which are far more dangerous to shipping than were conditions in the river before the dams were built.

HORSE HURRIED TO DOCTOR.

Wise Animal Knew What to Do When It Got Colic.

Bloomington, Ind.—The most sensible horse of local record was found here when the family animal of Samuel Johnson became sick with colic, and of its own accord made its way to the veterinary eight blocks away. Dr. Sweesy heard a noise in his yard and he found the Johnson horse reeling in pain. He treated the animal and sent it home.

To Trace Shells by Telescopes.

Washington, D. C.—One hundred observation telescopes are to be purchased by the Ordnance Department of the army. They are to be used in coast artillery practice to watch the fall of shots.

Return Wave of Immigrants.

Washington, D. C.—Immigration officials scatter a few bits of information which tend to lessen the pessimism stirred by the news that 600,000 Europeans have already booked passage back to America.

WE HAVE AN OPIUM EVIL OF OUR OWN.

Extent of Illegitimate Use of the Drug in This Country.

The Smokers Not Confined to the Chinese, Who Seem to be Adopting Measures to Stamp It Out—In New York City It Is Estimated That 5,000 Whites Hit the Pipe.

Washington, D. C.—In spite of the fact that the Chinese population in the United States is much smaller than it was in 1878 the importation of smoking opium into the United States has increased more than 250 per cent since then. In 1907 the importation of smoking opium was 157,000 pounds. These facts are only a few of the startling features of the reports now being received at the State Department by the American commissioners to the international congress to investigate and report on the growth of the opium habit.

The investigation is being conducted by Dr. Harlilton Wright of Washington, one of the commissioners who has his headquarters in the office of Assistant Secretary Huntington Wilson of the State Department. Already he has reports that show that the importation of opium to the United States from 1903 to 1907 increased 1,000,000 pounds over the importations for a comparative period immediately preceding. It has been ascertained also that about 75 per cent of the importations are used in the manufacture of morphine. Of the manufactured products of the drug only 25 per cent get into legitimate uses.

In New York City there are said to be about 3,000 Chinamen, of whom 500 are smokers of opium; another report places the percentage of the smokers at one-third of the entire population. In Philadelphia there are 1,000 Chinese, fully one-third of whom are addicted to the habit of smoking. These figures do not take into consideration the moderate smokers of whom there are many. The returns made to the commission estimate that there are 5,000 white smokers in New York City.

The sources of information upon which the commissioners rely are State pharmacists, members of the American Medical Association, police reports, manufacturers of opium, chemists, druggists, and boards of health.

One of the interesting facts gleaned by the investigation is that the users of the drug among the Chinese population in the United States are anxious to give it up and the young men are being strongly impressed by the destructive influences of the use of opium. Chinese doctors have devised a cure for the habit which is being generally resorted to by victims of the drug. The efficacy of the cure has not yet been fully tested.

When the commissioners to the international congress were appointed they were instructed that the primary purpose of the international congress was to consider the growth of the opium habit in the far East. It occurred to Dr. Wright that we might profitably investigate the prevalence of the habit in the United States. He set about getting reports from all the large cities, and up to this time the replies have been rather startling. He believes that it proves conclusively that we have an opium evil at home which demands our attention before we start out to reform the Orientals.

He has not yet received full reports from New York City, and those that have come are conflicting, but enough has been received to indicate that in the United States the use of opium as a habit has grown to an alarming extent and that its growth is not among the Chinese residents, who, on the contrary, seem to be adopting measures for stamping it out, but the progress is among the whites and what surprises him is that it is not among the slums but in the professional classes, where the highly keyed nervous systems seem to crave narcotics. Many reports indicate that the "strenuous life" is in a measure responsible for the recourse to the drug.

LIVES ON \$75 A YEAR.

Musician Trying to Save \$10,000 for the Poor.

Omaha, Neb.—In order that he may give his entire property to the poor, Victor Schmidt, a well-known Omaha musician, was discovered living in a cellar for which he paid \$1.50 a month. In his pocket were certificates of deposit for nearly \$8,000. Schmidt asserts that he lives on \$75 a year and gives the balance of his earnings to the poor.

Schmidt is a college-bred man and a former student at a German university. He has always been a charity worker. He is attempting to save \$10,000 with which to establish an institution for the poor.

British Take to Parasols.

London, England.—The Englishman has taken to parasols. After this, maybe he will adopt the picture hat, and in time he may even come to fans.

IMPOSTOR POSED AS LONG-LOST SON.

Lived on the Fat of the Land Till the Real Jake Kinderman Made Appearance.

San Bernardino, Cal.—By the return of Jake Kinderman after twenty-one years' absence, his family find that that they have been made victims of an unscrupulous impostor who for several years has posed as the real Jake Kinderman, lived in ease, and disgraced the family name by his strange conduct. Because they supposed he was their son they put up with him.

The impostor dropped into the family six years ago and laid claim to being the long lost son. He was received with wide open arms as he told a straight story of his past. Friends of the family from far and near were invited to meet him. Then he began to show signs of a peculiar nature. He carried two big pistols in his belt and wore a cowboy hat and cowhide overalls. He shocked his relatives by applying for the position of official dog catcher. For months he rode a big horse, chasing dogs. It was made so warm for him that he finally left, but he reappeared in Pasadena, where he took the dog catcher's job. Later he went to Long Beach to catch canines. After that he drifted into Arizona and six months ago returned, being given another welcome by the parents. For several months he had been missing.

On a recent morning a stalwart young man called at the Kinderman home. He was in the navy blue.

"I'm your son, Jake; don't you know me, mother?" he exclaimed as his parents opened the door.

Mrs. Kinderman caught one glimpse of the man's honest blue eyes, heard his voice and fainted. The sailor carried her into the house, while his father, brothers and sisters swarmed about him, not knowing who he was nor whether he had better be placed under arrest.

"Jake! Jake!" cried the overjoyed mother. She revived, and in an instant the entire family was about him, completely carried away with joy at his return.

How the impostor became possessed of the information which made it so easy for him to set at rest all fears as to his identity is a mystery to the real Jake Kinderman, though it is certain that the two men must have met probably in some foreign land, during the wanderings of the real Jake Kinderman.

When the real Jake ran away with Joe Rubidoux they followed a circus. Then Kinderman joined the navy, and for eighteen years has served Uncle Sam. He fought for his country at Manila. He was seized with a desire to know the fate of his family and he started for home on a leave of absence. He will return to the navy for a three years' enlistment and when that is served he will be retired.

CHILDREN MADE BLIND.

One-Third Victims of Careless Doctors and Midwives.

Springfield, Ill.—One-third of the blind children of this country are the victims of careless physicians or midwives.

This is the charge that Superintendent George W. Jones of the Illinois School for the Blind, makes in an article in bulletin of the State Board of Charities. Superintendent Jones says:

"Inflammation of the eyes of the new born is an acute infection occurring from one to three days after birth. A two per cent. solution of silver nitrate is an absolute specific for this disease and a one per cent. solution can be administered without danger by the most untrained person."

AUTOS USELESS IN WAR.

Tests at Pine Plains Manoeuvres Were Unsatisfactory.

New York City.—The automobile is practically useless for military purposes, is the gist of the report filed at the headquarters of the Department of the East, United States Army, on Governor's Island. This report, signed by Lieut. Col. E. F. Glenn, Twenty-Third Infantry, and Capt. William T. Johnson, Fifteenth Cavalry, refers to the tests made at Pine Plains, N. Y., during the thirty days' army manoeuvres.

Ask Publicity for Accidents.

Sharpsville, Penn.—With a view to lessening the number of accidents, the American Anti-Accident Association of this city, asks the press of the country to make a special feature of all accidents occurring in this country, placing the occurrences under a regular heading, as is done with sporting, financial and other features that are classified. Such featuring, it is believed, would cause people to consider more carefully the cause of accidents and assist in a possible prevention.

Humming Birds Vanishing.

London, England.—Lord Stanmore, giving evidence before the Select Committee on the Importation of Plumage Prohibition bill, said that when he went to Trinidad (as Governor) in 1886 there were eighteen or nineteen different kinds of the humming bird, but now there are only about five.

AN OCTOORON POSED AS A WHITE GIRL.

Chicago Negress For Many Years Concealed Her Secret.

MOTHER TELLS STORY

Why Lillian Beatrice Watkins Committed Suicide—Back of the Girl's Story is a Tragic Narrative of Race Conflict Which Brought Aching Hearts to a Score.

Chicago, Ill.—Lillian Beatrice Watkins, a beautiful negress, who for years passed herself off as a white girl, killed herself when her cup of bitterness became full to overflowing. A man had fallen in love with her, and passionately loving him in return, she confessed her secret to him. He gave her \$15,000, married another girl and a month later blew out his brains in Washington Park. The girl in planning of her own death adopted his method, even to sending a bullet crashing into her right temple.

Back of the girl's death is a tragic story of a conflict of race which brought aching hearts to a score of persons. As the young girl lay in a north side undertaking room a negress bent and withered, leaned over the body and wept.

She was the girl's mother, who in order to allow her only daughter to associate with white folks, had given her up and passed her daily on the street without a sign of recognition. And yet the golden haired octooron loved her dark skinned mother, and on secret visits to her home lavished affection upon her.

Thomas F. Kennedy, the motive for whose suicide in Washington Park on January last had been a mystery until now, was the man who fell in love with the ill-fated girl. She returned his love and told her mother that they were engaged and that she intended to keep her race a secret, but she worried so over possible discovery that one night she sobbed out the truth. Kennedy left her and a month afterward married Gwendolyn Reese. Four weeks after his marriage Kennedy was found dead in Washington Park, only a few blocks from his home where he had furnished elegant apartments for his bride.

Lillian Watkins the last year had been living at the home of Samuel C. Phinney, No. 376 Dearborn ave. Mr. and Mrs. Phinney never suspected that the girl was a negress. Miss Watkins was employed as a stenographer in the First Trust and Savings Bank, and all of her fellow workers thought she was a Caucasian. On one or two occasions friends had remarked that she had rather a dark skin, and Miss Watkins always turned the subject by remarking carelessly that she had Hindu blood, as her grandfather was a Hindu.

She studied at the University of Chicago. At one time she lived at the Virginia Hotel and for a few months was a guest at the Warner Hotel, Thirty-third street and Cottage Grove avenue.

Mrs. Ida Watkins, the girl's mother, lives at 3571 Forest avenue. With tears streaming down her face she told the story of her daughter's struggle to obtain recognition as a white.

"My child's misfortune was that she was born with a white skin and golden hair. Oh, how proud I was of my little baby when she lay at my breast and I saw her delicate skin and golden tresses. I little thought of the shame and misery it would cause her later in life. Her father was a white-skinned mulatto and Lillian was even whiter than he.

"Until my little girl was sixteen years old she always passed as a colored girl. Then a schoolmate put it into her head that she could pass as a white girl, and she came home and told me that, while she still loved me, she wanted to be known as a white girl and asked me not to recognize her as my daughter. I thought my heart would break and we both cried for hours, but finally I saw that Lillian's happiness depended on the sacrifice and I made it.

"Then Lillian became converted to the Catholic religion and entered a convent in Buffalo, N. Y. She wanted to take the veil but became ill and confessed to the priest that she was a negress. I was living in Hamilton, Ohio, at that time, and Lillian came home. A few months afterward she came to Chicago and then sent for me. She explained gently that she was known as a white girl and would have to visit me secretly. She gave me \$50 a month for my expenses and came to see me three times a month. When we passed on the street we did not recognize each other.

"Then came my daughter's great unhappiness. She passionately loved Thomas Kennedy and she told me that he loved her. She told him her secret and they parted. He married in a few weeks and a month afterward shot himself. He gave Lillian \$15,000. She has left me all of this money in her will, and in her will wrote that I was her nearest and dearest relative. So you see she did love me although my skin is black."

Miss Watkins shot herself in her room at the Phinney home. She evidently had deliberated a long time before she committed suicide.

ESCAPED CONVICT DEPUTY SHERIFF.

Model Citizen for Eleven Years—Identity Disclosed by Former Fellow Prisoner.

Williams, Ariz.—"No necessity for that," said Frank Sherlock, as H. E. Woods, a ranger, covered him with a revolver and declared him under arrest. Sherlock had been recognized as Charles Bly, a convict who rode away from the New Mexico penitentiary on the warden's horse eleven years ago.

Ever since his escape the fugitive has lived an exonerated life. For eight years he served as a deputy sheriff of Mojave County, and in that time had run down many desperate criminals. He was held in the highest esteem by his fellow townsmen, and the revelation that he was an escaped convict came as a shock to the entire community.

Recently Sherlock became a successful contractor and secured contracts at Nelson, Ariz. A workman in tattered clothes approached him later and appealed to him for work. A moment later the stranger extended his hand and said: "Why, hello, how are you?" The supposed stranger was a fellow convict who had served in the penitentiary when Sherlock alias Bly, made his escape. Sherlock gave him a job but discharged him later.

This incensed the ex-convict and he betrayed Sherlock. The next day Captain Christian, of the New Mexico penitentiary arrived and started for Santa Fe with Sherlock, where he has two years to serve on a four year sentence for horse stealing. Because of his exemplary life the citizens of his home town will make an effort to secure his pardon.

DENTISTRY FOR DOGS.

Cost of Filling and Scraping a Canine's Teeth.

London, England.—An observing reporter of a local daily on overhearing two ladies discuss the relative merits of their pet dogs' teeth at the Peking Palace Dog Show, started upon a tour of investigation among fashionable West End dentists and made the important discovery that several well known dental surgeons made a large income by attending to the teeth of their client's pet dogs. Said one:

"I frequently attend to the teeth of pet dogs belonging to my clients, and that practice is common in our profession. Scraping dog's teeth is a simple enough and almost painful operation. I have on several occasions cleaned a dog's hollow tooth and filled it. Only once have I taken a wax impression and supplied false teeth, and the dog soon got rid of them. The instruments are the same that we use for human beings.

"Show dogs are brought to me for their teeth to be scraped or stopped, as a decayed tooth means loss of points in competition. My scale of prices is: Scraping a set and cleaning, £1, 1s.; refilling and cleaning one tooth, 6s.; making a bicuspid or incisor, 17s. 6d.; making a canine and grinder, £1, 1s. I have never supplied a full set of teeth for a dog, and could only give a fancy estimate, but the work could not be done properly under 25 guineas."

PLANTING EYELASHES.

Hair of One's Head is Threaded Along Edge of Eyelid.

Paris, France.—"Planting eyelashes" is the latest torture which women endure for beauty's sake. The operation which is "very delicate and painful," is this described in the Paris Health Journal:

A long hair is singled out of the patient's head. A needle is threaded with it and forced in and out of the skin along the edge of the eyelid, forming a series of loops. These loops are then cut at the extremities and the rows of lashes thus obtained are curled upward with curlers. When the operation is finished the patient has to spend twelve hours with an oiled bandage over the eyes. The process for the manufacture of eyebrows is similar.

400 KEPT FROM SUICIDE.

Persuaded to Live by Salvation Army Officers.

Chicago, Ill.—Five of the Salvation Army officers, among them Brig. Alexander McMillan, the founder and head of the famous "Anti-Suicide bureau," has left Chicago to take command in various parts of the United States.

Within a year or more since the Anti-Suicide Bureau was started exactly 400 men and women have applied for advice at the headquarters. According to the army officials a large proportion of these would have taken their lives if the bureau had not intervened.

Balloon Parties for London.

London, England.—The "balloon party" is said to have arrived, and, indeed, there are hostesses who boast the possession of a tame balloon for the entertainment of their guests.

Helium Really Liquefied.

London, England.—Prof. Onnes has telegraphed to Prof. Dewar confirming the statement that he has succeeded in liquefying helium.